DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY E Schmelzer DATE 7/2/85
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JULY 10 1981

Dear Mr. Cotter:

I am responding to your letter of April 22 to the President concerning the proposed sale of AWACS aircraft to Saudi Arabia. We recognize that this issue is controversial and that strong sentiments have been expressed against the sale. However, we are urging members of Congress not to take a position against the sale without first allowing the Administration to put forth the reasons why we think that this sale is very much in the U.S. national interest. We anticipate a full Congressional review of the proposed sale and we will be prepared to respond to Congressional concerns.

In the interim, I would like to take this opportunity to outline why we believe this sale serves the U.S. national interest.

Our proposals emphasize this Administration's determination to counter the erosion in Middle East/Persian Gulf security, bolster our friends, protect vital Western interests, and block Soviet exploitation of regional tensions and vulnerabilities. We believe it is important to build the confidence of our friends by helping them with reasonable and adequate means of defense.

Our sales to Saudi Arabia are proposed in the context of a longstanding security relationship in defense of mutual vital interests. We are not granting a unilateral favor. Strengthening security in the region and continuing the search for peace between Israel and the Arab countries are mutually reinforcing elements in our policy. These states are more likely to move toward peace if they feel secure and confident. A more secure Saudi Arabia will help the Saudis promote stability in the region and expand their already great cooperation with us.

The AWACS aircraft we propose to sell will significantly improve the Saudis ability to defend their immensely important oil facilities in the northeast by enabling them to meet an air attack more effectively -- a purpose also in the U.S. interest. AWACS aircraft would provide the only effective warning of a low altitude air attack on petroleum facilities

The Honorable
William R. Cotter,
House of Representatives.

along their Persian Gulf coast. The AWACS is a defensive system. Essentially a flying radar station, an AWACS aircraft carries no weapons. It could not be used effectively with the combat aircraft of other countries without extensive joint planning, training, and secure communications equipment which the other Arab countries do not possess. An AWACS cannot detect ground targets, and does not possess radio monitoring, photo reconnaissance, or other intelligence gathering capabilities. I would point out that we deployed four U.S. AWACS aircraft to Saudi Arabia to meet the potential threat of the Iraq/Iran war, and that the danger to the region also threatens Israel's security.

The United States is taking a number of steps to help ensure that AWACS and other technologies sold to the Saudis will not be compromised. In addition, U.S. military versions of cryptographic equipment and certain other sensitive systems will not be included in the Saudi AWACS aircraft. We are also working out a security of information agreement to protect the sensitive equipment we are proposing to sell to Saudi Arabia, which will include provisions for joint periodic security inspections of Saudi facilities.

We recognize that our proposed sale is of great concern to Israel. However, a central feature of U.S. policy is to ensure the security of Israel. Israel already has a highly effective air defense system, manned by well-trained personnel, including sophisticated aircraft such as the F-15 and F-16, as well as defensive missile and gun systems. Any attack by Saudi Arabia on Israel would be prohibitively costly.

We are planning to seek Congressional approval to provide Israel with additional military sales credits of $300 million in each of fiscal years 1983 and 1984. These credits will enable the Israelis to purchase additional air defense aircraft or other equipment they have deferred because of their difficult financial position. These funds will be added to an already substantial military and economic assistance program for Israel and should total over $2.8 billion in fiscal year 1982. We believe that Israel will be able to maintain its qualitative edge and will remain capable of defeating any combination of Arab forces. We will also work closely with Israel to counter the Soviet threat.

Finally, let me assure you that we would view the use of any U.S.-supplied equipment of any sort by Saudi Arabia against Israel as a matter of utmost gravity. The Government of Saudi Arabia has assured us it will use U.S.-supplied equipment only for defensive purposes. Saudi operation of its F-15s and AWACS aircraft will depend on continuing U.S. maintenance and logistical support. The United States routinely places transfer and use restrictions on arms we sell to foreign states -- others do not. We do not believe it would be in

U.S. or Israeli interests for anyone else to replace the United States as Saudi Arabia's major arms supplier.

We hope you will share our judgment of the importance of these proposals for the overall U.S. security posture in the Middle East and Persian Gulf region. We believe that U.S. efforts to respond to legitimate Saudi defense requirements while maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge hold the best promise for creating the conditions to achieve our objectives of peace in the region and the protection of our friends, including Israel.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Fairbanks
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

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6/30/81:x23121
S/S:8118653
Clearance:H:EMartin for

Previously cleared language: NEA/ARP:J.Countryman for
NEA:JWTwinam
T:RAherne
PM:DOcmanek

ID 8103646 NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL PAGE 001

PEFEPPAL DATE: 17 JUN 81

MEMORANDUM FOR: STATE SECPETAPIAT **8118653**

DEPAPTMENT OF STATE

DOCUMENT DESCPIPTION: TO: PPES

SOUPCE: COTTEP, WILLIAM P

DATE: 22 APP 81

KEYWOPDS: SAUDI APABIA FMS

CO

SUBJ: OPPOSES SALE OF AWACS TO SAUDI APABIA

PEQUIPED ACTION: DIPECT PEPLY FUPNISH INFO COPY

DUEDATE: 20 JUN 81

COMMENTS:

Cathy Millson

FOP ALLEN J LENZ

STAFF DIPECTOP

---------- FOP NSC USE ONLY ----------

FOP INFO KEMP NAU SCHWEITZEP F O CM C

KIMMITT

Received in S/S-I
6/18/81-0945-RB

8118653

June 11, 1981

Dear Mr. Cotter:

Let me apologize for this delay in responding to your April 22 letter to the President expressing your strong objection to the sale of AWACS E-3C sentry planes to Saudi Arabia.

Please be assured that your views on this matter are appreciated. I have taken the liberty of directing your correspondence to the immediate attention of the President's foreign policy advisers for thorough review and consideration.

Thank you very much for writing and sharing your concerns with us.

With cordial regard, I am

Sincerely,

Max L. Friedersdorf
Assistant to the President

The Honorable William R. Cotter
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

MLF:CMP:ASR:asr

cc: w/copy of incoming, NSC Secretariat, for DIRECT response. Please send copy of response to Charlie Ponticelli, WHIte House legis. Affairs.

WILLIAM R. COTTER
1ST DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2134 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-2265

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8118653

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

April 22, 1981

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The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to register my strong objection to the sale of five AWACS E-3C sentry planes to Saudi Arabia.

While the sale of this plane to Saudi Arabia may indicate our friendship with this nation, arms shipments to any Arab nation must be balanced by our deep commitment to another important ally in the region - Israel.

It makes little sense to try to establish an evenhanded Middle East policy and at the same time support the introduction of new sophisticated military equipment. While you should be given some latitude in most foreign policy areas, the decision to sell the AWAC system to Saudi Arabia is wrong and I will oppose it.

I understand the arms package for Saudi Arabia will not be sent to Congress until this summer. I hope you will reconsider your decision during this time.

I am,

Sincerely,

Bill Cotter

WILLIAM R. COTTER
Member of Congress

THIS STATIONERY PRINTED ON PAPER MADE WITH RECYCLED FIBERS

S/S#

Date 8118653

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
TRANSMITTAL FORM

FOR: Mr. Richard V. Allen
National Security Council
The White House

REFERENCE:

TO: The President

FROM: Congressman W.R. Cotter

DATE: April 22, 1981

SUBJECT: Opposition to AWACS Sale to Saudi Arabia

WHITE HOUSE REFERRAL DATED: June 17'81

NSC# 8103646

_____ THE ATTACHED ITEM WAS SENT DIRECTLY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ACTION TAKEN:

_____ A draft reply is attached

_____ A draft reply will be forwarded.

_____ A translation is attached.

_____ An information copy of a direct reply is attached.

XX We believe no response is necessary for the reason cited below.

_____ Other

REMARKS:

Drafted: NEA/ARP:MArietti
6/30/81:x22111
Clearances: NEA:JWTwinam
NEA/ARP:JRCountryman
PM:DOchmanek
T:RAherne
H:EMartin

L. Paul Bremer, III
Executive Secretary

UNCLASSIFIED